

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee, Subcommittee #1
Meeting of Tuesday, September 21, 2010
Town Hall, Romer Room

Attendance: Adrienne Terrizzi, Rob Crowner, Mary Streeter, Anurag Sharma. Also: Harry Brooks, Peggy Roberts, Kris Pacunas.

1. Call to order: Mary calls the meeting to order at 3:37pm.

2. Minutes: Mary moves, Rob seconds, and the minutes of the September 9, 2010 meeting are approved by a vote of 2-0.

3. Review of data: Rob presents an updated report of the cost analysis he delivered at the previous meeting. The annual cost of an electronic voting system is assumed to include amortization, batteries, and replacement of some remote devices (clickers). The subcommittee discusses whether the cost analysis indicates that electronic voting would be an economical option. Sharma points out that other factors may affect the decision. Rob will forward his spreadsheet, including several different amortization schedules, to the subcommittee.

Kris states that a purchase of less than \$25,000 would require only three vendor price quotes rather than a competitive bidding process, greatly simplifying his research effort. He will include \$25,000 for an electronic voting system in his FY12 capital request; if it is approved, he will bring a specific proposal forward. Kris recommends projecting a five-year lifespan for any new system, but expects that prices will continue to fall such that even a complete replacement would cost less in the future than it does now.

Kris states that the questions he would like to have asked at the moderators' meeting are: "Who is using electronic voting now?" and "What vendors are being used?" With regard to Town Meeting, he recommends simply determining whether an electronic voting system is desired without getting into details.

4-6. Questions for moderators/implications of electronic voting: Adrienne suggests that TMCC meet with Harrison Gregg before he attends the Massachusetts Moderators Association in late October and Mary agrees to invite him to a meeting on October 5 or October 12. Meanwhile, the subcommittee brainstorms topics that should be addressed in the consideration of adopting electronic voting, including:

- Is it possible and/or prudent to display a running tally of individual votes before the final result is declared?
- What is the importance of intangible losses, such as opportunity for socializing or stretching, resulting from a switch away from tally voting?
- Would a vendor allow the town to use a system on a trial basis for an entire meeting before a decision about adoption is made?
- Would a bylaw amendment need to be debated and approved even before such a trial?
- Should Town Meeting members be required to turn in their clickers after every session or only at the end of the meeting?
- If the latter, would a member be disenfranchised for any session to which he or she neglected to bring a clicker?
- How much training would be needed, and how often?
- Can the system be hijacked or otherwise subverted?
- Can the bylaws be amended broadly enough to allow for use of electronic voting in a range from occasionally through universally, in anticipation of an evolving acceptance of the practice?
- Will an electronic voting system interfere with the sound system in the auditorium and/or personal electronic devices?

7. Agenda for next meeting: Adrienne states that TMCC should prepare an interim report on electronic voting for the Fall Town Meeting. Mary states that as much as possible should be in writing in order to minimize time-wasting.

The committee agrees to revisit all items from the current agenda at the next meeting.

8. Adjournment: The meeting is adjourned at 4:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Crowner

Documents provided:

1. agenda
2. tally card versus electronic voting cost analysis by Rob Crowner
3. spreadsheet supporting the above analysis